

Appln. No.: 09/445,892
Amendment Dated: January 8, 2004
Reply to Office Action of: October 28, 2003

MAT-7855US

Remarks/Arguments:

Claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 10, 14 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over JP 10-218675 in view of Mikeska, et al (U.S. Patent No. 5,085,720). Claims 17 and 18, however, were indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, the features of claims 17 and 18 have been added into claims 1 and 9, respectively. Furthermore, claims 17 and 18 have been cancelled.

In view of the amendments set forth above, the above identified application is in condition for allowance which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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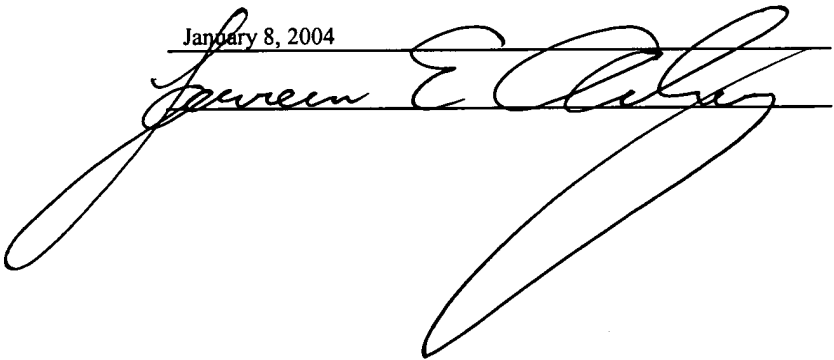
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